

Message Text

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CODEL ROSENTHAL/FRASER

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TAGS: OREP: (ROSENTHAL, BENJAMIN AND FRASER, DONALD)

SUBJECT: CODEL ROSENTHAL/FRASER

PLEASE PASS REP. FRASER FROM HIS OFFICE: (EDITORIAL
FROM MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE DATED FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 1975):

QUOTE: DONALD FRASER'S CONCERN:

-- ANYONE WHO HAS VISITED SAIGON AND MADE FRIENDS AMONG THE
SOUTH VIETNAMESE CAN SHARE REP. DONALD FRASER'S CONCERN FOR
THEIR IMMEDIATE FUTURE. UNLESS SOME ORDERLY POLITICAL
SETTLEMENT OF THE WAR CAN BE ARRANGED, FRASER WARNED THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON WEDNESDAY, "THE WITHDRAWAL OF
AMERICAN CITIZENS AND THE DISENGAGEMENT OF THE UNITED
STATES FROM THAT WAR IS GOING TO BE PAINFUL AND BLOODY,
MAKING ASYLUM DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE FOR VIETNAMESE
WHOSE LIVES WILL BE IN JEOPARDY." "PERHAPS," HE TOLD US
LATER, "I SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE OUT TO SAIGON (IN LATE
FEBRUARY). IT JUST REMINDED ME OF WHAT DECENT PEOPLE
SOME OF THEM ARE."

-- IT WAS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT FRASER, A RESPECTED SENIOR
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MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, TOLD THE HOUSE

THAT HE MIGHT BE WILLING TO SUPPORT THE FORD ADMINIS-

TRATION'S REQUEST FOR US DOLS 300 MILLION IN MILITARY AID FOR THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT -- IF THE ADMINISTRATION CHANGED ITS POLICY OF "UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT THIEU."

-- FRASER CONCEDED THAT SAIGON'S COLLAPSE IS INEVITABLE, BUT, HE SAID, THE FACT OF CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF AID MIGHT "BRING SOME STABILITY TO THE BATTLE LINES IT MIGHT SLOW DOWN THE ON-RUSH (OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE), AND WE COULD WORK OUT SOME KIND OF POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT." THEIU IS NOT WILLING TO SETTLE POLITICALLY -- AND THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT WILL NOT DEAL WITH THEIU -- SO THAT IS WHY THIEU MUST STEP DOWN, FRASER SAID.

-- THE KIND OF POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT FRASER HAS IN MIND IS THE 1954 GENEVA AGREEMENT, WHICH FOLLOWED THE FRENCH DEFEAT AT DIEN BIEN PHU. UNDER THAT SETTLEMENT, BETWEEN 800,000 AND ONE MILLION VIETNAMESE WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE NORTH. THERE WAS SOME VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIVIDUAL FRENCHMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES, BUT MOST OF THOSE WHO WANTED TO LEAVE GOT OUT UNSCATHED.

-- CONGRESSIONAL REJECTION OF THE AID REQUEST, FRASER FEARS, WOULD TRIGGER SAIGON'S COLLAPSE AND LEAD TO WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE AGAINST THOSE AMERICANS STILL IN VIETNAM AND AMONG THE VIETNAMESE. THERE ARE AS MANY AS 100,000 TO 150,000 VIETNAMESE -- GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, MILITARY COMMANDERS, PEOPLE WHO WORKED WITH THE AMERICANS -- WHO, IT IS FEARED, MIGHT BE MARKED FOR REPRISALS BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT. "I DON'T UNDERSTAND," SAID FRASER, "WHY SOME PEOPLE ARE HAPPY TO SEE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TAKE OVER."

-- FRASER -- AS HE HAS DONE SO OFTEN BEFORE -- IS RUNNING AGAINST THE TIDE OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION ON THE VIETNAM WAR. BUT ALL ALONG, HIS CONCERN HAS BEEN FOR THE VIETNAMESE, AND NOW, IN A LAST-DITCH EFFORT TO EASE THEIR UNCLASSIFIED

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PAIN AND SUFFERING, HE IS URGING THAT ONE MORE ATTEMPT BE MADE TO CREATE SOME KIND OF NEGOTIATING SITUATION. HIS ANGUISH OVER VIETNAM IS DEEP AND GENUINE. BUT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN CONGRESS, IT DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY THAT ANYTHING AMERICA DOES CAN STAVE OFF SAIGON'S EVENTUAL COLLAPSE. WE THINK CONGRESS IS RIGHT IN TURNING ITS ATTENTION TO AIDING THE REFUGEES. END QUOTE. KISSINGER

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